

*Rep. Linda Sánchez released the following statement regarding the vote to repeal the Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy:*

I rise in strong support of repealing the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy.

We have lived with the damaging effects of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” for 17 years. It harms our military readiness and reduces the recruiting pool for our military. This is why Secretary of Defense Gates, Admiral Mike Mullen, and a majority of service members support its repeal.

This policy is both counterproductive and morally wrong.

At a time when our armed forces need qualified, dedicated men and women in uniform, we shouldn’t be forcing them out just because they are gay or lesbian.

Gay and lesbian men and women have served – and currently serve – our country with honor and distinction. They have laid to rest the ignorant belief that a love for one’s country is somehow based on who you love.

I am proud to stand with them and support the brave gay and lesbian service members who ask for nothing more than a chance to serve their country without hiding who they are.

I urge my colleagues to support this common-sense legislation that strengthens our military and our country and fulfills the promise of America as a place where all citizens, not just the politically popular ones, have equal rights.